

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
FILE
memorandum

DATE: December 11, 1991
REPLY TO
ATTN OF: Red Wolf Coordinator, FWS, Asheville, NC
SUBJECT: Monthly activity report - November 1991
TO: Regional Director, FWS, Atlanta, GA (FWE/SE)
Attention: Mr. Dave Flemming

The major item of interest this month was the release of red wolves into the Great Smoky Mountain National Park (Park). The final rule was published in the Federal Register on November 4, 1991. Project personnel met at Park headquarters on November 5, 1991, to discuss and finalize release plans. WBIR-TV interviewed and filmed me that same day as part of an educational video and information package they are preparing. On November 8, 1991, I gave a presentation to Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) personnel as part of a meeting to discuss the release and project plans and show them the acclimation pens in Cades Cove. Procedures for handling calls on sightings were worked out with TWRA. On November 11, 1991, I participated in processing the four wolves to be released. The processing included capture, health checks, blood sampling, weighing, and fitting with telemetry collars. WBIR-TV personnel attached two remote cameras to trees focusing on the pen gate and a deer carcass. These cameras were successful in getting the first film of wolves leaving an acclimation pen for life in the wild. The pen gate was opened on the afternoon of November 12. I participated in monitoring on November 15, 18, and 19. The animals were spending the night in the vicinity of the release, and the two adults were venturing down into Cades Cove proper in early morning. On one day the adult female spent the day in a wooded area in Cades Cove. On that same day, the male encountered a steer and was routed by it before heading back to the release area. Two patches of rabbit fur and remains were found in the wooded area in Cades Cove where the female laid up during the day, indicating she may have made a kill(s) of rabbit. On November 19, the female's collar failed during monitoring activities in early morning. Project personnel successfully recaptured and replaced the collar on the female on the night of November 21. The adult pair, accompanied by one or both pups, have ventured into the back country and the interior of Cades Cove, usually during the early morning. The wolves seem to be adjusting their movements to avoid visitor activity.

I sent the final rule on the Smokies release to 223 individuals and agencies. A few people requested the environmental assessment; I sent copies to them. I sent letters, accompanied by red wolf information, to two schools that supported the release. One submitted a petition with 267 signatures. The other submitted individual letters from students.